The Protocols (TCP/IP Illustrated, Volume 1)

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Fatbrain Review With a hands-on approach to studying, this best-selling guide explains TCP/IP protocols. In eight chapters, it provides the most thorough coverage of TCP available. It also covers the newest TCP/IP features, including multicasting, path MTU discovery and long fat pipes.

The author describes various protocols, including ARP, ICMP and UDP. He utilizes network diagnostic tools to actually show the protocols in action. He also explains how to avoid silly window syndrome (SWS) by using numerous helpful diagrams. This book gives you a broader understanding of concepts like connection establishment, timeout, retransmission and fragmentation. It is ideal for anyone wanting to gain a greater understanding of how the TCP/IP protocols work.

The Protocols (TCP/IP Illustrated, Volume 1) Details

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Casper Gasper says

Still one of the best books to read and study for networking, despite it's age. To give you one idea how old this book is, there is a section towards the end that lists other TCP services and there's a few lines on a new application called the World Wide Web :-)
Nevertheless, it's surprising how little has changed -- highly recommended for anyone who's involved with networks.

Ivan Idris says

This is a fantastic textbook about different network protocols. The protocols are illustrated using the output of tcpdump and other utilities. Protocols discussed include:

IP
ARP
RARP
ICMP
UDP
IGMP
TFTP
BOOTP
TCP
SNMP
FTP
SMTP

Beside the protocols several diagnostic tools such as ping and traceroute are covered in detail. The book contains lots of diagrams, that illustrate the protocols even further. Each chapter ends with exercises. The solutions of some of those exercises can be found in the book as well. I give this book 4 stars out of 5.

Pete says

If you really want to understand the TCP/IP protocol buy this book. To go even deeper get volume 2 which discusses the actual code implementation

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Kai Weber says

Another example of a book about computer technology that is outdated and a good read at once. The middle layers of network technology are described in minute detail, at just the right level of abstraction. This book

(originally published in around 1994 I think) predates the advent of something like search engines for the WWW by years, and yet all the technologies described are still relevant today - or at least still working under the hood of other things. ifconfig, tcpdump, arp are commands that my Linux shell still understands today. The thread binding the whole book together is the author's intent to not just describe, but to actually show what's happening when you're running this or that (inter)network protocol. Examples are first described, then explained. This didactical impetus makes this book timeless - at least as long as we are still relying on TCP, UDP, IP, DHCP and their brothers and sisters

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Michael Finocchiaro says

A classic like all of Richard Steven's books about networking, TCP/IP Protocols Vol 1 is a critical formative text on how the internet was created. As I have said elsewhere, without TCP/IP there would be no Google, no Facebook, and no Drumpf? Oops...

Shailesh says

The first technical book I read. There is no better introduction to Network Protocols for beginners - both for technical and non-technical folks. I absolutely loved it and my love affair with network continues ......

Marin says

The range of topics covered and a level of detail that's spot on for each of them made this a dazzling cross-section of TCP/IP networking. Thanks to its numerous detailed but clear descriptions, fragments of computer networking knowledge you might have get woven together into a whole, and to-the-point details that the book is peppered with are the markers that fall into the empty spaces. The dynamics of the protocols (TCP in particular) are so well described (and illustrated!) that you get a real feel for them.

The problems this book has, I think, are attributable to the changes made in the second edition. I've never read the first, but I've skimmed over some of it. The shift in the material covered feels exactly right (the one exception - which made me sad - was ditching the routing protocols), but there were certain points in the book at which I really had to summon my resolve to push through. This happened in the DHCP & ICMP chapters, and almost all the time during the security chapter (EAP, IKE and DNSSEC are vivid examples). Why did this happen? I think the reason is that the writing got too terse and convoluted, and didn't have the same quality that Stevens' writing exhibits. The wording and flow demonstrate that the topic is very easy for Kevin R. Fall, but unless you already know what he's talking about, you'll only too often be struggling to keep up. Then you'll fail and reread whole paragraphs that are unfortunately written with the density of mathematical proofs.

I can't hold that against the book though, and I'd still read the second edition over the first. There are some challenges, but there's so much to like!

Allisonperkel says

if there is a bible for tcp/ip programming this would be it

Dhinakaran says

I read this book for my Internetworking subject in my master's. It is a lovely book, I fell in deep love with networking after reading this book. This is a great book for someone who wants to master networking concepts. Apart from the theoretical presentation, the example scenario will imprint the working principles of each networking protocol in your heart. I again it will be imprinted in your heart. It will never leave from your memories. I love this book.

John says

Didn't understand TCP/IP very well (despite a college-level networking course) before reading this book. Now I am basically like Neo in the Matrix.

Mark says

Stevens had an amazing ability to simply and clearly explain technical topics that can be quite complex. While I knew quite a bit about the TCP/IP protocol stack this book helped pull this topic together in a more complete way that I could have on my own, or by reading several other books. I still find myself regularly reaching for this book (or the other 3 in the series).

Michael says

One of the classics.

Wbenetti says

This book is essential for anyone who needs to understand TCP/IP and related protocols. This includes network engineers. Yes, you. I know what you're thinking. You're thinking that you know all about routing protocols and what else is there to running routers besides that and ACLs? Well, you're wrong and you should feel bad for thinking that. Lots of stuff goes across routers, this post, my last Amazon order. All of it uses fundamentals covered in this book, and understanding how the transport layer works gives you a leg up when designing networks. Pick this up (or the Douglas E. Comer book) and love it. The worst case scenario is that you hate it. Since it's hardcover you can use it to hit people who tell you that something is broken and

it's a network problem. ;)

Dave Peticolas says

W. Richard Stevens: still the gold standard for computer texts.

Jon Swanson says

Best technical writing I've ever read.

Stevens starts at the bottom of the networking stack and works the way up, explaining each component in a way that is both detailed and interesting. Each chapter is filled with lucid examples and makes you understand how all of the pieces come together.

It's an older book, but still very relevant. Have yet to find a better text on the fundamentals of networking.